

## 27. HITHERTO UNRECORDED PLANT FROM UPPER GANGETIC PLAIN WITH ITS ETHNOBOTANICAL USES

(With a text-figure)

During the survey of Flora of Basti district in Uttar Pradesh which is very close to Nepal territory with the geographical limits of  $26^{\circ} 30'$  and  $27^{\circ} 30'$  North latitude,  $82^{\circ} 12'$  and  $83^{\circ} 50'$  East longitude, the senior author collected an interesting plant from the area, which was later identified as *Aeschynomene americana* L.

The genus *Aeschynomene* L. is represented by 30 species, distributed in tropics of both the hemisphe-

res. In India, only two species were reported till the middle of this century from the plains upto 1650 m in Himalaya (Hooker 1885). But Chatterjee (1960) and Maheshwari and Ghosh (1971) have added one more species which is indigenous to tropical America, i.e. *Aeschynomene americana* L. from Hazaribagh and Ranchi districts in Bihar. After a decade an additional locality has been reported by Mohanan (1981) from Quilon district of Kerala.

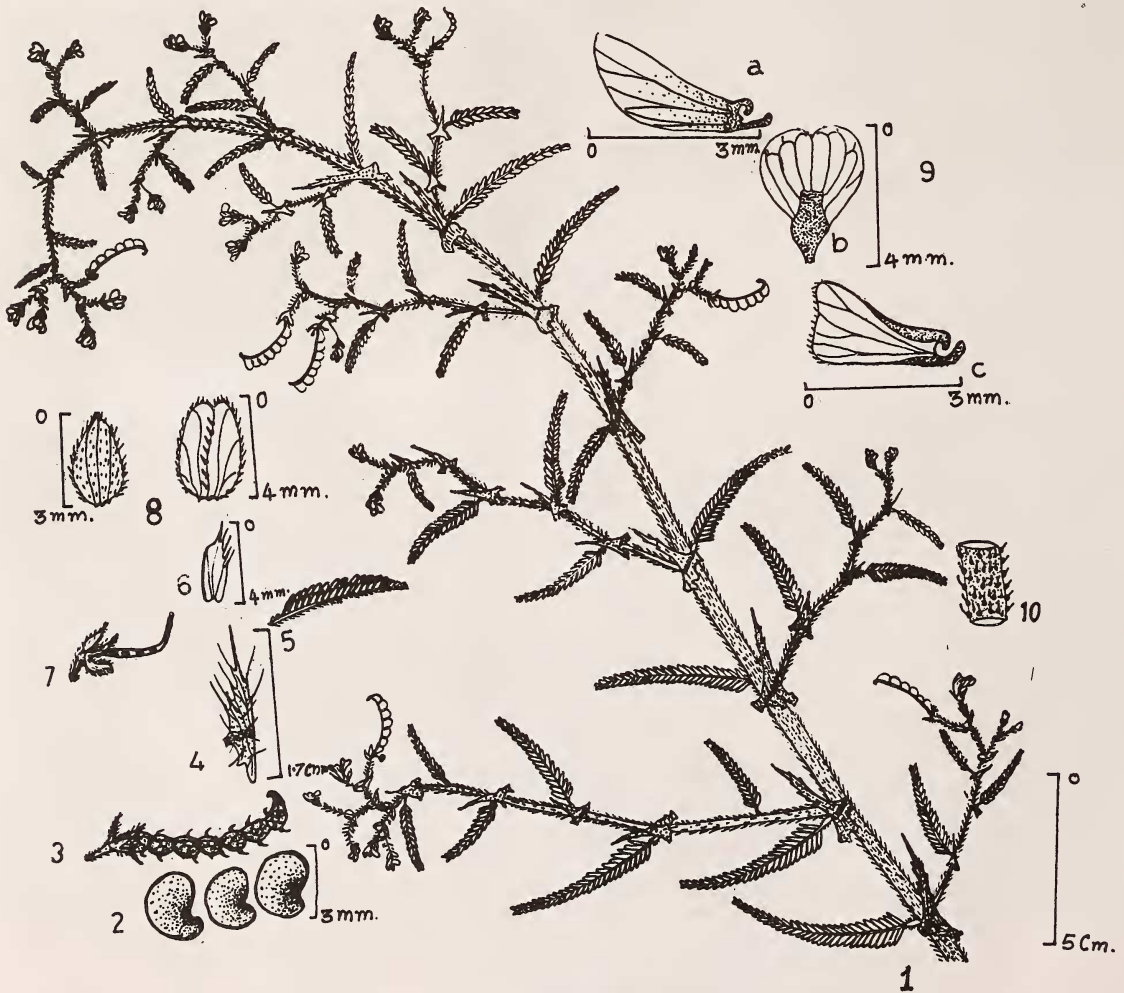


Fig. 1. *Aeschynomene americana* L.

1. Habit; 2. Seeds; 3. Fruit; 4. Stipule; 5. Leaf; 6. Leaflet; 7. Gynoeceium; 8. Sepals; 9. Petals - a. keel; b. standard; c. wing; 10. Enlarged portion of stem, showing swollen based glandular hairs.

**Aeschynomene americana** L. Sp. Pl. 713. 1753; Chatterjee, Sci. & Cult. 25 : 488-1960. *A. mexicana* Birali ex Calla, Herb. Podem. 2 : 195. 1834. (Fig. 1).

An erect or decumbent, glandular-hispid to subglabrous annual herb with purple flower, frequently found in marshy places along ponds and lakes in association with *Aeschynomene aspera* L., *Cyperus imbricatus* Retz., *Eleocharis palustris* R. Br., *Hydrolea zeylanica* Vahl and *Melochia chorchorifolia* L.

Fls. & Frts. : August - January; Sohratgarh (Nau-garh); D.C. Saini, 5899.

Uses : The leaves and tender branches are cooked and eaten as vegetable. The small pieces of stem are used as fishing-floats.

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D. C. SAINI  
S. K. SINGH  
SURESH SINGH

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28. **ALTERNANTHERA PHILOXEROIDES** (MART.) GRISEB. - A NEW RECORD FOR NORTH-WESTERN HIMALAYA  
(With a text-figure)

The genus *Alternanthera* Forsk. of the family Amarantaceae comprises of about 200 species in the tropics and subtropics and is best developed in America. Some of the species have been introduced in India, Burma, Australasia and Malaysia. The genus is represented by six species in India. *Alternanthera philoxeroides* (Mart.) Griseb., a south American weed, probably Brazilian in origin, was introduced long ago in Malaysia and quite naturalized in Java. Maheshwari (1984) reported this species for the first time from India from lakes and waterpools in the eastern parts of India mainly from West Bengal and Bihar. Bennet (1979) recorded this species from Howrah district (West Bengal) commonly growing in marshy ditches, sides of ponds and along water-courses, while Varma (1981) reported it from Bhagalpur (Bihar) growing frequently in ponds and ditches and Deb (1983) reported it from Agartala (Tripura) growing in stagnant or slow moving shallow ditches forming large communities. Very recently, Gupta and Murty (1986) reported it as a new record for Upper Gangetic Plain growing abundantly along the Hindal and Jamuna river.

During the course of preparation of the flora of Kumaun Himalaya, a few specimens were collected

from Champhawat in Pithoragarh district growing commonly near stagnant or slow moving shallow water, ditches and marshes. After a critical study, it was identified as *Alternanthera philoxeroides* (Mart.) Griseb. A critical study and herbaria and published literatures indicate that this species has not been reported so far from mountainous regions of north-western Himalaya (Hooker 1885, Collett 1902, Duthie 1906, Gupta 1968, Singh and Kachroo 1976, Sharma and Kachroo 1981, Chowdhary and Wadhwa 1984, and Naithani 1985). Therefore, the collection of species from Kumaun is an important addition to the flora of Kumaun Himalaya in particular and the flora of north-western Himalaya in general.

The present paper provides a description of this species with illustration to facilitate easy identification. Field number along with collector's name is given in brackets. The voucher specimens are deposited in the Herbarium, Department of Botany, D.S.B. College, Kumaun University, Naini Tal.

**Alternanthera philoxeroides** (Mart.) Griseb., *Abh. Ges. Wiss. Goett.* 24: 36. 1879; Kunze, *Rev. Gen. Pl.* 2: 540. 1891; Schinz. in *Engl. and Prantl, Nat. Pfam.* 3. 1a: 115. 1893; Backer in *Fl. Males.*